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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 001204

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SUBJECT: UNDP PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE TO UNMIN

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) UN Development Program (UNDP) Resident Representative Matthew Kahane told the Ambassador June 18 that UNDP was contributing the majority of the over 100 UN personnel deployed to manage verification of Maoist combatants. Kahane said the duration of the process would depend on whether the Maoist leadership encouraged an estimated 16,000 new recruits and children to depart the camps of their own free will. The Resident Representative emphasized that the UN Mission in Nepal "runs" while UNDP "does." Kahane lamented the poor conditions in the cantonments but highlighted that the UN, under the November peace agreements, had no responsibility for camp management. Kahane also bemoaned the lack of plans for reintegration of those who voluntarily left or were expelled from the camps. The Ambassador voiced concern that those expelled, with no alternatives for income generation, would look to the Young Communist League (YCL) for support, with dire consequences for security in the run-up to the Constituent Assembly election. Kahane said that UNDP would assist in the establishment of Local Peace Councils in 10 to 15 pilot districts and was willing to play a role in coordination of international election observation.

UNDP Supporting Verification

2. (C) On June 18, UN Development Program (UNDP) Resident Representative Matthew Kahane informed the Ambassador that UNDP was contributing the majority of the over 100 UNDP, UNICEF, and UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) personnel managing the verification of Maoist combatants. Kahane said Phase II of the arms management process was set to begin on June 19. UNDP had mobilized personnel with experience from Afghanistan and Rwanda and had conducted extensive training and exercises for UN staff involved. (Note: In a June 13 meeting with Emboff, UNDP's Crisis and Recovery Officer said UN personnel were also using a database system UNDP had developed to manage the vetting process. End Note.) The duration of verification, the UNDP Representative stated, would depend on whether the Maoist leadership pushed ineligible "combatants"

to voluntarily exit the camps. If the estimated 16,000 new recruits and children departed of their own free will, the UNDP chief said, the verification process would happen quickly. Otherwise, there was no telling, due to weather and the security environment, how long the process would last.

UNMIN "Runs," UNDP "Does"

13. (C) When the Ambassador asked the UNDP Representative about the relationship between UNDP and UNMIN, Kahane responded that "UNMIN runs" while "UNDP does." Kahane highlighted the lack of recognition of the many UNDP personnel who had been mobilized for the UNMIN-run arms monitoring and verification effort. Kahane said he was surprised that the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) did not have more personnel with arms management expertise; UNDP's experience in demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) had been an asset in finding personnel to assist the arms management process in Nepal. Citing UNMIN's narrow one-year election support and arms monitoring mandate, Kahane also said that UNDP's niche was supporting the peace process over the mid- to long-term.

Camp Management in Dire Straits

14. (C) Kahane lamented the continuing deterioration of conditions in the cantonment sites, but emphasized that the UN, under the November peace agreements, had no responsibility for camp management. The management of the camps had been left to the GON and the Maoists and they had made little progress over the past months. Kahane said that

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UN arms monitors were frustrated on a daily basis with the lack of infrastructure or even sufficient perimeters around the camps and had expressed concern that during the monsoon, it would be difficult to keep Maoists combatants in the camps. (Note: Indian Ambassador Mukherjee expressed concern about the poor state of the camps after a June visit to the PLA camp in Chitwan. End Note.)

Reintegration: No One is Ready

15. (C) The UNDP Representative bemoaned the lack of planning by the Government of Nepal (GON) and the Maoists for reintegration of those who voluntarily left or were expelled from the camps. While UNICEF had initial plans for reintegrating former child combatants, debate continued within the GON over compensation packages for new recruits (who would be ineligible to remain in the camps) and how funds for children would be handled. Kahane said that even transportation back to communities had not been arranged. Because they had no history of violence against their home communities, new recruits expelled from the camps might have an easier time returning to their villages, Kahane opined. However, the Ambassador pointed out, their training and indoctrination by Maoist commanders in the camps might make a return to civilian life difficult. Kahane stressed that little thought had been given to which sectors of the economy could absorb new workers, and therefore, vocational education programs and job creation efforts that would be appropriate. The Ambassador highlighted that the jobless were likely to look to the Maoist leadership for their livelihood, making employment as Youth Communist League members an appealing option. The lack of reintegration planning could have dire consequences for security in the run-up to the CA election.

Local Peace Committees to Be Piloted

16. (C) The Ambassador asked Kahane what role UNDP was playing in supporting the establishment of local government, pointing to the lack of details in the November peace

agreements on local governance arrangements. Kahane said that UNDP would assist in the establishment of Local Peace Committees (LPCs) in 10 to 15 pilot districts to test the model and see whether LPCs were a useful local dialogue and conflict resolution tool. Kahane emphasized that the districts chosen would be ones where there was a chance of success, areas where Maoists would not likely dominate the local bodies. The Ambassador concurred that LPCs should be tested in pilot districts, citing the vacuum of governance in the districts and the accompanying security challenges.

UNDP as Election Monitoring Coordinator?

17. (C) The UNDP Representative said UNMIN, with 50 advisors at the Election Commission and UN Volunteers to be deployed beginning in July to the districts ahead of the CA election, was well-placed to provide technical support on the election process. A gap, however, existed in donor support and coordination for international election monitoring. UNMIN and the Election Commission, because of a conflict of interest, would not play a role in international election observation. The Ambassador asked whether UNDP could coordinate such an effort, ensuring that international election observers, including the Carter Center, the European Union, and bilateral observers, were sufficiently covering the country and pooling reporting. Kahane said UNDP had played this role elsewhere and would be willing to do it in Nepal if funding could be found.

UNDP Role in Constitutional Development

18. (C) Kahane said a UNDP Advisor, Yesh Gai, had been advising the GON on the Constituent Assembly process and constitution development. It was troubling, Kahane said, that Nepalis were talking only about the election process as

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opposed to the work of the Constituent Assembly; perhaps it was unfeasible for the political parties to look ahead to the development of the constitution at this time. The Ambassador disagreed, saying that it was vital that the parties begin to think through how the CA and the constitution drafting effort would be managed, to ensure an inclusive process. It would be important to remind the parties that the CA would operate as a regular parliament and a constitution-drafting body, Kahane and the Ambassador agreed, with a dual responsibility that required a deliberate, open, and consultative process.

Comment

19. (C) As the UN agency most experienced in demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) efforts worldwide, UNDP should play a more robust role in filling important gaps left due to UNMIN's narrow arms management and election support mandate. Coordinating international donor support for reintegration would be a good starting point. The most profound lesson from UN experience in DDR is that all phases of a DDR process must be planned from the outset. A combatant registration and vetting process will be for naught if combatants abandon poorly managed camps and join violent groups because they lack alternatives for income generation. If the peace process here succeeds, thousands of former Maoists, and eventually former Nepal Army personnel, will seek a return to civilian life. One practical first step would be for UNDP to organize a multi-donor assessment on reintegration options, mobilizing bilateral and multilateral agencies to determine sectors of the economy that could absorb former combatants, exploring acceptable arrangements for integration of Maoists into security forces, and examining other reintegration schemes such as a civic works corps to rebuild war-damaged infrastructure. Instead of lamenting their role as second fiddle to UNMIN, UNDP should do its part to help ensure Nepal's transition is successful.

